/53 cont'd/

526 As far as I know, there is one kind of recreation popular among
171 the Miao. This is to swing on a rope string, which is usually done in late spring and early summer. The construction and use of the swing among the Miao are similar to that of the Li. It has been described in detail in my previous book, Report on an Investigation of the Li of Hainan Island, and a repetition here is not necessary.

/54/ Chapter VII. Religion, Superstitions, etc.

771 1. Taoist Priests

Taoism is the only religion of the Miao. It has greatly in-
793 fluenced their social life. Those who conduct the religious ceremony are the Taoist priests, who are divided into two different groups, the civilian Taoist priests and the military Taoist priests.
● 795 The pictures and religious texts used by these two groups are entire-
776 ly different. As I saw during the tso-chai ceremony, the gods worshiped by the civilian group were Li Hsieh Wang, Tsu Kung, Shen Nung, Tou Kung, and others. Those worshiped by the military group were Yü Ch'ing, Shang Ch'ing, T'ai Ch'ing, Shang Yüan, Chung Yüan, Hsia Yüan, Yang Hu, and others. There is a pictorial representation of each god. In general, the gods of the civilian group have large heads and those of the military group have smaller
779 ones. In addition to the gods mentioned above, I have found other
776 names in Taoist classics, which are as follows:

T'an Kuan	Chiu Kuan	Ch'en Shih-wu Kuan
Li Hsin-sheng	Kung Huang	Chia Kuan
Ti Szu	An-t'an Ch'uan	Chiu Niang /The ninth lady/
Younger sister Fu-ch'i	Yü Huang	Lui-chia Min-kuan (Lui Kung)
Ching Chu	Chia Hsien	Tang-nien Wen Chu /The god of the year's plague/

/62 cont'd/

779 Hundreds of birds bowed in front of it.
539 The goddess of jade protected her from behind.
When a Taoist priest passed by, he would repeat the name of Buddha;
When a Buddhist priest passed by, he would burn some incense.
When an old man of sixty passed by, he would say mournfully:
"What a pity that one so bright died young!"
When an old woman of sixty passed by, she might say sadly:
"What a pity one so bright did not live long!"
When a young fellow of eighteen passed by, he would murmur:
"Why am I not so lucky as to court a clever girl like her?"
When a young girl of eighteen passed by, she might say with grief,
"Why did such a clever girl have to be buried so young ?"
Men and women are kindly advised hereby,
If you have children, think early of their futures.
Should your neighbor to the east have a son, his marriage must not wait long!
Should your neighbor to the west have a daughter, must she not be married while young?
One must not follow the example of Sister Chiu of the T'ang family,
Without a husband, she died like a blossoming /rose/.
Chiu-niang is now here in person to bless those in front of the altar.
You, Chiu-niang, give your blessing to whoever is leading the horse.

779 195 The Taoist books of the Miao are mostly written in this poetic style with seven words in each line. They have nothing to do with the preaching of Taoism. This aspect is /63/ worthy of study.

793 795 Both the civilian and military Taoist priests use wooden seals inscribed with different symbols. The civilian Taoist priests have two rectangular seals of the same size, (See illustration). The military Taoist priests also have two wooden seals, one of which is inscribed with symbols similar to those of the civilian Taoist priests.

/66 cont'd/

715 Since Taoism has a great influence upon the lives of the Miao,
713 the Taoist priests therefore assume great importance in Miao society. Furthermore, only a man with the qualifications of a Taoist priest has the opportunity to read the classics and receive an education, and thus to acquire specialized knowledge. Consequently, Taoist
534 priests enjoy a higher social status than an ordinary person and with it, many special privileges. Under such circumstances, all families, except those under very poor economic conditions, (the initiation ceremony costs money) always send their sons to be initiated for the Taoist priesthood. The fact that the above-mentioned unweaned child was carried there by his mother shows how anxious the parents are to have their children initiated. /67/

776 2. Names of the Important Gods

There are many gods which are worshiped by the Miao. According to what they told me, the most important gods are the following:

(a) Yü-huang—the greatest god in heaven;
(b) T'u-ti-kung—the greatest god on earth;
(c) Ching-chü-kung—the greatest mountain god;
(d) Hai-lung-wang—the greatest water god.

3. Traces of Totem Worship

771 According to Miao legend, which will be discussed in the next
789 chapter, the dog was their first ancestor; that was their totem.
825 Traces of totem worship still remain in their everyday life. Though
[262] there are dogs in every family, yet they have never killed them for food. They let the dogs die a natural death, or they trade the dogs with the Li people for other commodities. I have observed this kind of transaction. This apparently derives from the old custom
[784] of the totemic society, i.e. "to kill totem animals is taboo." Furthermore, the fact that the seal of the military Taoists was inscribed with an outline of a dog might also have some significance here, which is worth noting. /68/